WILLIAM HENRY.

DRAMATIZED FROM THE BOOKS OF MRS. A. M. DIAZ,

"THE WILLIAM HENRY LETTERS," AND "WILLIAM HENRY AND HIS FRIENDS,"

BY

MRS. GEO. L. CHANEY.

WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR.

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The Riverside Press, Cambridge.
1881.

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(LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & CO.)
1875.

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BOSTON:
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In dramatizing Mrs. Diaz's truthful and admirable story of New-England life, the dialogue has been taken as nearly as possible from the books, that their sparkle and flavor might be preserved. Yet much abridgment was necessary; and actors will find that a reading of the books will assist them very much in their work.

C. I. C.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

UNCLE JACOB CARVER, a farmer,	Scenes	1, 4, 5, 6.
WILLIAM HENRY, his nephew,	"	2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
DORRY, BOBBY SHORT, } Schoolmates of William Henry,	"	2, 6.
TOMMY, Uncle Jacob's youngest child, five or six years old,	"	1, 4, 6.
GRANDMA, Uncle Jacob's mother,	"	1, 4, 5, 6.
AUNT PHEBE, Uncle Jacob's wife,	"	1, 4, 5, 6.
LUCY MARIA, the elder daughter,	"	1, 4, 5, 6.
MATILDA, the younger daughter,	"	1, 4, 5, 6.
LAME BETSEY, OTHER BETSEY, } two elderly single ladies,	"	3, 6.

COSTUMES.

UNCLE JACOB. — Dark coat, high dicky, plaid gingham neck-handkerchief, shoes, blue woollen socks, pants rather short.

WILLIAM HENRY. — Scenes 2, 3, and 4, Red hair, face much freckled, flannel blouse or jacket, dark pants. Scenes 5 and 6, A short coat, and trousers to match, hair less red, face very slightly freckled.

DORRY. — Scene 2, Blouse waist or jacket, and trousers. Scene 6, Coat and pants.

BOBBY SHORT. — Jacket or blouse, and pants.

TOMMY. — Belted gingham apron, long stockings, knee-pants, laced or buttoned shoes.

GRANDMA. — Plain black alpaca gown, rather short, with tight sleeves, open a little at the throat, with a plain lace neckerchief folded inside, and fastened with a small brooch; a straight black silk apron; a drab silk handkerchief, or nice little square shawl, folded over her shoulders; a plain, close-fitting lace cap, with a little quilling or frill around the face, and tied with narrow ribbon under the chin; silver spectacles; prunella shoes; knitting.

AUNT PHEBE. — Scenes 1 and 5, Rather gray hair, a pretty ninepenny calico dress, an apron, linen collar, white dotted-muslin cap, of Marie Stuart shape, with quilled border, drawn over the hair with an elastic cord, and ornamented with a small bow of cherry or blue ribbon. Scenes 4 and 6, Dark dress with plain skirt and basque, pretty cap.

LUCY MARIA. — Scenes 1 and 5, A pretty calico dress, bright ribbons. Scenes 4 and 6, A scarlet flannel blouse-waist, and black alpaca skirt.

MATILDA. — Scenes 1 and 5, A pretty calico dress; hair in two hanging braids. Scenes 4 and 6, Cambric dress, or a blue blouse waist, and alpaca skirt.

LAME BETSEY. — Scene 3, Green checked gingham dress, very wide muslin collar, dark calico apron, with strings tied in front; white cap, with deep ruffled border, set back a little on the head; crutch. Scene 6, Deep black cloth cloak, large black bonnet and veil, brown or black dress, small white cap set far back on the head, crutch.

OTHER BETSEY. — Scene 3, Dark calico dress, large dark calico apron, ruffled cap, set farther forward than Lame Betsey's. Scene 6, Black shawl, broad collar outside it, large black bonnet and veil, drab dress, white stockings, low morocco shoes, loose drab gloves, tarlatan cap with broad strings and little white satin folds.

PROPERTIES.

SCENE 1. — Framed engraving of Lincoln, war-maps, tin dish-pan, towels, waiter, dishes, dish of cake, light stand, candles, basket of mending, newspaper; two letters for Uncle Jacob's pocket.

SCENE 2. — Marbles, string, pieces of wood, knife, top, foot-rule, jackstones, &c., for Bobby Short's pocket; ball for William Henry; knife and stick for Dorry; William Henry's letter.

SCENE 3. — Shears, calico apron, comb, huge pumpkin-pie, or its equivalent, peppermints, carpet-bag.

SCENE 4. — Bandbox with dress-cap, harmonicum in a little box, cake, pies, doughnuts, &c., candles, carpet-bag, bib, high-chair, cup for Tommy to break.

SCENE 5. — Paper and pencil for drawing, bonnet, and millinery articles, bowl of raisins, chopping-tray, knife, and meat, dish of apples and knife, newspaper.

SCENE 4. — Trunk, plate of cookies, letter, socks, box of salve, roll of linen, kettle, Lucy Maria's letter, comb and paper.

WILLIAM HENRY.

SCENE I.

UNCLE JACOB'S HOUSE.

A framed engraving of Lincoln, and war-maps, on the wall. A table at the back of the stage, with dishes, tin dishpan, towels, waiter, and plate of cake. Little old-fashioned table with basket of mending. UNCLE JACOB *in arm-chair, reading newspaper.* AUNT PHEBE *mending* TOMMY'S *clothes.* TOMMY *rolled in a shawl, seated in a cushioned rocking-chair, — very old-fashioned, — which* GRANDMA *afterward occupies. Three other chairs. Two letters in* UNCLE JACOB'S *pocket.*

Tommy. Mother, hain't you dut my tloze most mended? I'm orful tired a-settin' here with nothin' on,' thout it's a shawl! 'Sides, this old rockin'-chair 's so tippery I'se afraid I'll tummul out! Say, mother! I won't dump off picket-fence agin if you'll let me go!

Aunt Phebe. No, Tommy. You are so careless, something must be done, and I don't know but keeping you still is about the worst punishment such a restless piece can have; so sit still, or you'll tip over.

(TOMMY *cries.* *Girls rattle dishes.* UNCLE JACOB *reads paper.*)

Uncle Jacob (*reading newspaper*). "Our boys slept on the battle-field that night. Just before daybreak a contraband came to headquarters with the information that a strong force of Confederates was rapidly approaching." (*Great clatter of dishes.*)

Lucy Maria. Oh! Now, father, won't you read that last sentence over again? I never *did* see such slippery suds!

Uncle Jacob. "Just before daybreak a contraband came to headquarters with the information that a strong force of Confederates was rapidly approaching. Our boys sprang to arms, tired as they were, and"—

Tommy. Mother, I want a cake! Plimmy piece cake, mother?

Matilda. Do hush up, Tommy! You've had enough supper for six boys of your size!

Tommy. Hain't neither! Hungry, so!

Uncle Jacob. "Our boys immediately sprang to arms, tired as they were, and"—

Tommy. Father, I'm hungry! Piece of cake?

Uncle J. (*jumps up, and takes two pieces of cake*

off the table ; gives TOMMY *one, and eats one*). Shame to let a boy go hungry where there's plenty of cake!

Lucy Maria. A word for him, and two for yourself! Tommy got his liking for cake and plums natural enough.

Matilda. There! I believe the dishes are all done at last. For a small family, we do have the greatest lot!

Lucy Maria. *Small* family!

Matilda. And now let's take out our work, and go to sewing; and you've got to go to bed, Mr. Tommy. (*Aunt* PHEBE *folds up* TOMMY'S *clothes, and takes* TOMMY *out of the rocking-chair.* MATILDA *lights candles, puts one on little, and one on large table; and* LUCY MARIA *puts away dishes.*)

Tommy. I don't want ter go ter bed! Boo hoo! Hain't had enough to eat!

Matilda. Boo hoo! And nobody ever saw the time you did!

Aunt P. Hush, Matilda! Growing boys are always hungry. But, Tommy, there's reason in all things. Now say, "Good-night" to your father, and prove that you mean to be a good boy by going to bed without a fuss.

Tommy (*ruefully*). Good-night, father.

Uncle J. Good-night, my son. "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy and wealthy and wise."

Tommy. Then why don't you go now, father?

Uncle J. Why? Because I — Good-night, my son.

(*Exit* AUNT PHEBE *hastily with* TOMMY. *Enter grandma with knitting-work.*)

Lucy Maria. Why, grandma! why didn't you come in before? You must have been lonesome sitting all by yourself. (*Places rocking-chair for* GRANDMA R. *front.*)

Grandma (*sits down*). Well, I was. I got to missing Billy so! Billy is so young to be off to school alone, and I'm so afraid something will happen to him!

Uncle Jacob. Had to send him away to keep him. Grandmother was spoiling him.

Lucy Maria. Well, I s'pose 'twas so; I know it was so: but we did hate to have Billy go!

Uncle Jacob. Where's Towser now? He didn't come to meet me to-night.

Grandma. He's got hold of Billy's old boots, and you can't get him away from them. He set a great deal by Billy. I haven't put 'em away yet. (*Sighs.*)

(*Enter* AUNT PHEBE. *All take their sewing, and sit down.*)

Aunt Phebe. Well, mother, you are looking sober to-night.

Grandma. I feel very anxious about Billy. I

told him he'd better write every day, so I could be sure just how he was, for if well one day he mightn't be the next.

Lucy Maria. O grandma! that's too bad! 'Tis cruel to ask a boy to write every day.

Aunt Phebe. I wouldn't worry, mother. Billy's always been a well child.

Grandma. These strong constitutions, when they do take any thing, 'tis apt to go hard with 'em.

Aunt Phebe. He's taken pretty much every thing that can be given to him already.

Grandma. I suppose they'll put clothes enough on his bed. I can't bear to think of his sleeping cold, nights.

Uncle Jacob (*jocosely*). Perhaps they have blankets in that part of the country.

Grandma. But people are not always thoughtful about it. I really hope he'll take care of himself, and not be climbing up everywhere. Houses and trees were bad enough; but now they have gymnastic poles, and every thing else to tempt boys off the ground. Oh, dear! When we think of every thing that might happen to boys, 'tis a wonder one of them ever lives to grow up. Isn't there a pond near by?

Lucy Maria. Oh, yes! Crooked Pond. That's what gives the name to the school, — Crooked Pond School.

Grandma. I hope he won't be whipped.

Aunt Phebe. Whipped! I should like to see any one whipping our Billy!

Matilda. O mother, I shouldn't!

Grandma. 'Tisn't an impossible thing. He's quick. Billy's good-hearted, but he's quick. He might speak up. I gave him charge how to behave. But what's a boy's memory? I don't suppose he'll remember half the things I told him. I meant to have told him again, the last thing, not to stay out in the rain, where there's nobody to see to his clothes being dried.

Uncle Jacob. Well, if a boy doesn't know enough to go into the house when it rains, he'd better come home.

Aunt Phebe. What I hope is, that he'll keep himself looking decent.

Lucy Maria. If he does, then it will be the first time. The poor child never seemed to have much luck about keeping spruced up. If anybody here ever saw William Henry with no buttons off, and both shoes tied up, and no rip anywhere, let 'em raise their hands.

Grandma (*looking sadly around, over her spectacles; sighs*). Billy always was hard on his clothes; but, if he only keeps well, I won't say a word.

Uncle Jacob. Now, mother, I shouldn't dare to say how many times you've been frightened to death about Billy. Many and many a time you've been

sure he was lost or drowned, or run over, or carried off, and never'd come back alive. But he's always managed to come out straight at last. If all the worry that's worried in this world was all piled up together, 'twould make a mountain; but, if all of it that needn't be worried was knocked off, what was left wouldn't be bigger than a huckleberry-hill. There's one thing that makes me entirely willing to trust William Henry away; and that is, he's always been a boy of principle. I have watched him closely, and I've noticed that he has a kind of pride in him that won't allow him to lie or equivocate in any way.

Aunt Phebe. That's true: true enough! Billy don't always look fit to be seen; but he isn't deceitful: I'll say that for him.

Matilda. When he went to our school, and was in the class below me, and there was a fuss among the boys, and all of them told it a different way, the teacher used to say she would ask William Henry, and then she could tell just how it happened.

Uncle Jacob. He couldn't have a better name than that.

Grandma. But I do wonder why we don't get a letter from him. Jacob, did you go to the post-office to-day?

Lucy Maria. Now, just as likely as not, father's had a letter in his pocket all the time: 'twould be just like him. (*Dives at his coat-pocket, and pulls*

out two letters.) My goodness sakes alive! If here ain't two, *both* from William Henry! (*Gives them to* GRANDMA, *who opens one*).

Uncle Jacob: Well, now, ain't that queer! I've had something on my mind all along, and I've been a-tryin' and a-tryin' to think what it was. And it was them letters!

Grandma (*gives the letter to* AUNT PHEBE). Phebe, I think you'd better read this. My eyesight isn't as good as it was once. (*Puts on her glasses, draws close to her, and looks her in the face.*) Now, Phebe, read loud, and do speak every word plain.

Aunt Phebe (*reads*).

MY DEAR GRANDMOTHER.

I think that the school that I have come to is a very good school. We have dumplings. I've tied the pills that you gave me, in case of feeling bad, in the toe of my cotton stocking that's lost the mate of it. The mince-pies they have here are baked without there being any plums put into them; so please need I say, "No, I thank you, ma'am," to 'em when they come round? If they don't agree, shall I take the pills or the drops? Or was it the hot flannels,—and how many? I've forgot about being shivery. Was it to eat roast onions? No, I guess not. I guess it was a wet band tied round my head. Please write it down, because you told me so many things

I can't remember. How can anybody tell when anybody is sick enough to take things? Don't let the cow eat my peach-tree. Dorry Baker says the cherries have peach-stones in 'em here. In a month my birthday will be here. How funny 'twill seem to be eleven when I've been ten so long! I don't skip over any button holes in the morning now, so my jacket comes out even. Why didn't you tell me I had a red head? But I can run faster than any of them that are no bigger than I am, and some that are. We learn to sing. He says I've a good deal of voice, but I've forgot what the matter is with it. We go up and down the scale and beat time. The last is the best fun. The other is hard to do. But if I only could get up, I guess 'twould be easy to come down. He thinks something ails my ear. I thought he said I hadn't any at all. What have a feller's ears to do with singing, or scaling up and down? Has Uncle Jacob sold the bossy calf yet? There's a boy here they call Bossy Calf, because he cried for his mother. He has been here three days. He sleeps with me. And every night after he has laid his head down on the pillow, and the lights are blown out, I begin to sing and to scale up and down so the boys can't hear him cry. Dorry Baker and three more boys sleep in the room we two sleep in. When they begin to throw bootjacks at me to make me stop my noise, it scares him and he leaves off crying.

One thing more the boys plague me for besides my head. Freckles. Dorry held up an orange yesterday. "Can you see it?" says he. "To be sure," says I. "Didn't know as you could see through 'em," says he — meaning freckles. Dear Grandmother, I have cried once, but not in bed. For fear of their laughing and of the bootjacks; but away in a good place under the trees. A shaggy dog came along and licked my face. But, O! He did make me remember Towser, and cry all over again. But don't tell, for I should be ashamed. I wish the boys would like me. Freckles come thicker in summer than they do in winter.

Your affectionate grandchild,

WILLIAM HENRY.

Aunt Phebe (*holds the letter, and wipes her eyes; passes the letter to* GRANDMA, *who puts on her glasses, and looks it all over*). The dear boy! To think of his getting up that way of hushing that little boy, so the others wouldn't laugh at him!

Lucy Maria (*takes the other letter from* GRANDMA). Now, mother, I'm going to read the other one. I'm afraid it will hurt your eyes: they look red. (*Reads.*)

MY DEAR GRANDMOTHER.

I do what you told me. You told me to bite my lips and count ten before I spoke, when the boys

plague me, because I'm a spunky boy. But doing it so much makes my lips sore, so now I go head over heels sometimes, till I'm out of breath. Then I can't say any thing. This is the account you asked me for, of all I've bought this week.

Slippery elm,	1 cent.
Cornball,	1 cent.
Gum,	1 cent.

The Two Betseys, they keep very good things to sell. They are two old women that live in a little hut with two rooms to it, and a ladder to go up stairs by, through a hole in the wall. One Betsey, she is lame, and keeps still, and sells the things to us, sitting down. The other Betsey, she can run, and keeps a yard-stick to drive away boys with. For they have apple-trees in their garden. But she never touches a boy if she does catch him. They have hens and sell eggs. The woman that I go to have my buttons sewed on to is a very good woman. She gave me a cooky with a hole in the middle, and told me to mind and not eat the hole. Coming back, I met Benjie, and he looked so sober I offered it to him as quick as I could. But it almost made him cry; because, he said, his mother made her cookies with a hole in the middle. But when he gets acquainted he won't be so bashful, and he'll feel better then.

I've launched my boat. She's the biggest one in school. Dorry broke a bottle on her and

christened her the "General Grant." The boys gave three cheers and Benjie sent up his new kite. It's a ripper of a kite with a great gilt star on it, that's got eight prongs. The master was walking by, and stopped to see the launching. When he smiles, he looks just as pleasant as any thing. He patted me on my cheek, and says he, "You ought to have called her the 'Flying Billy,'" and then he walked on. "What does the Flying Billy mean?" says I. "It means you," says Dorry; "and it means that you can run fast, and he likes you. If a boy can run fast, and knows his multiplication-table, and won't lie — he likes him." But how can such a great man like a small boy?

From your affectionate grandchild,

WILLIAM HENRY.

P.S. — When the boys laugh at me, I laugh too. That's a good way.

P.S. — If you send a cake, send quite a large one. I like the kind Uncle Jacob does. Aunt Phebe knows.

Aunt Phebe. Bless his heart, he shall have it!

Uncle Jacob. Put a good lot of frosting on it, and plenty of plums in it. Now, don't be mean on plums.

Matilda. As if mother ever was mean about any thing!

Uncle Jacob. I was afraid she might be persuaded that plums were not good for boys. They are. They are very good.

SCENE II.

HALL IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE.

WILLIAM HENRY, DORRY, *and* BOBBY SHORT, *with hats on.* BOBBY *pulls a great many things out of his pocket, and comes to jackstones, then plays with them.* WILLIAM HENRY *has a ball,* DORRY *a knife and stick.*

Dorry. I say, William Henry, that was real plucky of you to stand up there, and face the music, when the master asked which boy it was that ran through the Two Betseys' yard, and made such a piece of work of it. You could have sneaked out of it just as easy! None of us would have told.

William Henry. Catch me *sneaking* out of any thing, Dorry Baker! 'Tain't my kind. I was ashamed, I own up. But my folks say, "If truth is a loaded cannon, walk straight up to it," or something of that kind, and I've set out to do it; and I tell you what, Dorry Baker, when I set out for a thing, I ain't going to be beat! (*Doubles up his fist, and "squares off."*)

Bobby Short. Bully for you, William Henry!

Dorry. But, Billy, how did you manage to kick up such a fuss in such a little while?

William Henry. Why, you see, when you and I started from the pond, opposite ways, to run and see who would get home first, I cut across the Two Betseys' garden. But I don't see how I did so much hurt in just once cutting across. I knew something cracked: that was the sink-spout I jumped down on, off the fence. There was a board I hit, that had huckleberries spread out on it to dry. They went into the rain-water hogshead. *I* didn't know any huckleberries were spread out on that board. I meant to go between the rows, but guess I stepped on a few beans. My wrist got hurt dreadfully by my getting myself tripped up in a squash-vine; and while I was down there a bumble-bee came along, and stung me on my chin. I stepped on a little chicken, for she ran the way I thought she wasn't going to. I don't remember whether I shut the gate, or not, but guess not; for the pig got in, and went to rooting before Lame Betsey saw him, and Other Betsey had gone somewhere. But I got home first, anyhow! But I *am* sorry! Just think what master said about Lame Betsey getting lame saving a little boy's life when the house was on fire, a-jumping out of the window with him! And then he said there's as much as five dollars' worth of

damage done. Well, I've sold my football, and my brass sword, and my pocket-book, and I'm bound to pay 'em, and— I'll go now. You fellows stay here till I come back, quicker'n lightning. (*Runs out.*)

Bobby Short. Tell yer what, I like William Henry Carver! But I'm glad I haven't got to face the Two Betseys.

Dorry. So do I like William Henry. He's going home with me to make a visit, just as soon as he gets a letter from his grandmother letting him. I wrote to my sister to ask my mother to let me ask him to go home with me; and she said "Yes, only wait a week first," because the house was just got ready to have a great party, and she couldn't stand two muddy-shoed boys. Won't we have a bully time? (BOBBY SHORT *goes to the window, and looks out while* DORRY *is talking.*)

Bobby Short. I say, Dorry, come here! William Henry's just gone into the Two Betseys' shop. I can see Lame Betsey a-sitting at the window, and her cap going back and forth as she talks. Can't you? Ain't he catching it?

Dorry. Poh! they won't scold. "Other" looks kind of fierce sometimes, but she's as mild as a moonbeam when a feller owns up. I know. I've heard about it.

Bobby Short. I say, who's that Lucy Maria Billy's always talking about?

Dorry. Lucy Maria? that's his grown-up cousin at home. She's real funny, and cooks, and washes, and irons, and makes Billy's clothes, and is always dressed up in a pretty gown, and drawing pictures afternoons; always up to something, Billy says, and ready for a lark.

Bobby Short. I should like to know Lucy Maria. Who's Matilda?

Dorry. She's his cousin too; goes to school; plagues Billy awfully. His grandmother worries about him dreadfully.

(*Enter* WILLIAM HENRY, *out of breath, with a letter.*)

William Henry. Here's my letter, and now I can go!

Dorry. Why, does she say so?

William Henry. Hain't read it yet, but of course she will. About the Two Betseys, now, I tell you! When I asked how much money was to be paid, they said they shouldn't take any money; but if I would saw some wood for them, and do an errand now and then, they should be very glad. And Lame Betsey gave me something to put on my wrist to cure it.

Dorry (*throwing up his hat*). Hurrah! Three cheers for the Two Betseys!

Bobby Short. That's *six.*

Dorry. There are the boys on the playground.

I'm going to pass round the hat, for we all owe them something. They've got to take the money, any way.

Bobby Short. And let me carry it to them!

Dorry. Well, come on!

William Henry. Here! I want to put in my money! (*Exit Dorry, and Bobby Short.*) (*Alone.*) Well! Now I guess I will read grandmother's letter, and see what she says about it. (*Reads.*)

My dear Boy, —

We are willing you should go to see Dorry. Your Uncle Jacob has been past his father's place, and he says there's been a pretty sum of money laid out there. Behave well. Wear your best clothes. Your Aunt Phebe has bought a book for her girls, that tells them how to behave. It is for boys too, or for anybody. I shall give you a little advice, and mix some of the book in with it.

Never interrupt. Some children are always putting themselves forward when grown people are talking. Put "sir" or "ma'am" to every thing you say. Make a bow when introduced. If you don't know how, try it at a looking-glass. Black your shoes, and toe out if you possibly can. I hope you know enough to say "thank you," and when to say it. Take your hat off, without fail, and step softly, and wipe your feet. Be sure and have some woman look

at you before you start, to see that you are all right. Behave properly at table. The best way will be to watch and see how others do. But don't stare. There is a way of looking without seeming to look, — a sideways way.

Anybody with common-sense will soon learn how to conduct properly; and even if you should make a mistake, when trying to do your best, it isn't worth while to feel very much ashamed. *Wrong* actions are the ones to be ashamed of. And let me say now, once for all, never be ashamed because your uncle is a farmer, and works with his hands. Your uncle's a man to be proud of: he's kind to the poor; he's pleasant in his family; he's honest in his business; he reads high kind of books; he's a kind, noble Christian man; and Dorry's father can't be more than all this, let him own as much property as he may. I mention this because young folks are apt to think a great deal more of a man that has money.

From your loving

GRANDMOTHER.

P.S. — Be sure and not spend your money foolishly. Take your overcoat on your arm. When you come away, bid good-by, and say that you have had a good time, if you have had: not without.

William Henry. Well, now! Everybody tells boys not to spend money; but if they knew how

many things boys want, and every thing tasted so good, I believe they would spend money themselves. (*Enter Dorry, and Bobby Short.*)

Dorry. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Got five dollars and fifty cents! Ain't a boy that didn't put some in.

Bobby Short. Here, give us the hat, please. I'm to take it to the Two Betseys.

Dorry. What does your grandmother say?

William Henry. Says I can go, only to have some woman look me over. Now, who under the sun —

Dorry. Why, go to the Two Betseys! They'll do.

William Henry. So they will! And I promised to go and see 'em to-morrow afternoon, any way. All right. I'll go to the Two Betseys first, and meet you at the station. That do? (*Bell rings.*) Yes. All right! Come on, school! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

THE TWO BETSEYS' HOUSE.

A little round three-legged table, covered with a small white tablecloth, and various dishes. "LAME BETSEY" *sits knitting with a crutch at her side.* "OTHER BETSEY" *is setting the supper-table, and runs out and in. A rap at the door.* "OTHER" *opens it, and* WILLIAM HENRY *walks in.*

Other Betsey. Why, how do you do, William Henery? We're glad to see you!

Lame Betsey. We're proper glad to see you. How do you do?

Other Betsey (*takes his hat*). Now, ain't you cold? I've got an excellent good fire in the other room. Do come in, and set right up to it, and get warm!

William Henry. First rate. No, I ain't cold, thank you. I said I'd come round this afternoon before Dorry and I went off, and so here I am. But my grandmother wrote that I must have some woman look at me before I went off, so's to be sure I was all right.

Lame Betsey. A very proper thing to do. Your grandmother's a very sensible woman.

William Henry. Well, will you?

Two Betseys. Will we what?

William Henry. Why, look at me, and see if I'm all right, and fixed up spruce enough.

Other Betsey. Well, naow, Betsey! He wants us to look at him! Now, did you ever?

Lame Betsey. Well, no, I never did! Here, Betsey, my spectacles, there on the mantle-tree shelf! Well, now, I never did. (*Both put on spectacles, and walk admiringly around* WILLIAM HENRY.)

Other Betsey. Beautiful! You do look beautiful, William Henery!

Lame Betsey. Yes, William Henery, I'm sure you do look beautiful. Now, William Henery, walk off! (WILLIAM HENRY *walks off.*) Make a bow! (WILLIAM HENRY *bows; she walks up to him.*) Stop a minute, there's a mite of lint! Now just stand up there, and make another bow! (WILLIAM HENRY *makes another bow.*)

Other Betsey. Beautiful! Now walk off slow. (*He walks off. They nudge each other.*)

Lame Betsey. Just as if he'd been to a dancing-school all his life!

Other Betsey. Make one more bow, William Henery.

Lame Betsey. Seems to me his hair is a *leetle* too long: turn round, William Henery.

Other Betsey (WILLIAM HENRY *turns*). Yes, 'tis a *leetle* mite too long: 'tain't quite even.

Lame Betsey. Now, I used to be the beater for cutting hair; and, if you'll just get me my tailorin' shears, Betsey, I'll see what I can do. Now set right up, William Henery. There! Let me put my apron right round your neck: it's an old one, but you won't mind. (WILLIAM HENRY *sneezes as she ties it around his neck.*) Now, Betsey, you keep watch to see when it's even. (*She cuts with an old, squeaky pair of shears.* WILLIAM HENRY *sneezes.*) My gracious goodness! did I cut you, William Henery?

William Henry. No, ma'am.

Other Betsey. You mustn't sneeze when the scissors are so close to you. A leetle more, Betsey.

Lame Betsey (*stands off to look, comes back, and clips:* WILLIAM HENRY *sneezes*). Why, what a cold you have got, William Henery! Betsey, we'd better make him some hoarhound tea.

William Henry. Oh, no! I haven't a cold. (*Sneezes again.*) Those are jolly shears, only they don't stop themselves very easy.

Other Betsey. Well, they've been a-layin' up in the cupboard a good while, and I guess they want oilin'.

Lame Betsey. Seems to me that ain't quite even. Now, my mother used to keep a quart-bowl to cut her

boys' hair by. She clapped it over their heads, and then clipped all round by it, even. (WILLIAM HENRY *sneezes.*)

Other Betsey. Why, William Henery, I do feel concerned about you. What *doos* make you sneeze so?

William Henry. Well—I—guess—this apron-has-been-where-snuff-was! (*Sneezes twice.*)

Lame Betsey. Lor'! well, I shouldn't wonder! And I s'pose you ain't used to it. Now, it never makes me sneeze.

William Henry. Let me jump up, and I'll shake myself out even. (*Jumps up, and shakes himself.*)

Other Betsey (*combs his hair out, and parts it*). I guess that'll do: it looks better. Now you jist set down a little while, and I'll run out and shake this apron; and then we want you to stay to tea with us.

[*Exit with apron.*

William Henry. Why, I guess I must be going.

Lame Betsey. Oh, no! there's plenty of time, William Henery; and Betsey, she is set upon having you stay to tea, and she's made a pie a-purpose.

William Henry. Well, I guess I will, then, if you want me to.

Other Betsey (*coming in*). I put my tea down to draw when you came in, William Henery; so supper is all ready. Set right up, William Henery. Come, Betsey. (*Places chairs. They all sit at the table.*) I had to put the things on in saucers,

William Henery, because there isn't room unless we do. We've got a big table in the other room, and I suppose we might have set that out; but that table hasn't been set out for fourteen years, — eh, Betsey? Fourteen years, ain't it, since that table has been set out?

Lame Betsey (*shaking her head*). Fourteen years, Betsey.

Other Betsey. And I thought this might do. Have some sausages, William Henery, and some bannocks. Betsey, help William Henery to the butter. I'll have some flapjacks in a minute. Now, you must eat a good deal, and not go by us, 'cause our appetites are nothing to judge a growin' boy by. (*Goes into the other room with a plate.*)

William Henry. Why, there's supper enough for forty; and ain't it good! (*Eats heartily.*)

Lame Betsey. Now, do you think so! Be careful which handle of the sugar-bowl you take hold of, 'cause that one's *glued on*. We might have taken down our other chiny.

William Henry (*mouth full*). Yes'm.

Other Betsey (*entering*). Now, here's some flapjacks, William Henery. (*Puts them on his plate.*)

Lame Betsey. And here's a cup of tea for you.

William Henry. Oh, I can't bear tea!

Lame Betsey. Why, you can't? Now, it's very warmin' and restin', and you'd better.

Other Betsey. Yes, you'd better have some tea. I don't know what I should do without my tea. I couldn't eat a meal of victuals without it. I'll put in plenty of sugar. (*Puts in five or six spoonfuls.*)

William Henry. There, there's enough, thank you!

Lame Betsey. Take some more butter, William Henery. Now, don't be scared of it: there's more in the buttery!

Other Betsey. Yes, plenty more in the buttery, William Henery.

Lame Betsey. You'll have to be a *leetle* careful about the spoon-holder: the bottom of it's been off once. Now, do take a little more of this cake! (*Puts it on his plate.*)

Other Betsey. I guess I'll cut the pie now. (*Goes to an immense pumpkin-pie on a chair.*)

William Henry. George! if that don't beat all the pies!

Lame Betsey. How is Dorry, William Henery? He is a smart fellow. I wish he was here.

William Henry. So do I; and so would he, I guess, if he could see that pie!

Other Betsey. Well, I thought 'twould be a good time to make one when we were going to have company.

William Henry. I say! Please, may I measure it? (*Takes out his rule.*)

Other Betsey. Certainly! It's just such a kind of a pie as my mother used to make. I thought I might as well make a large one, so's to be sure to have enough.

William Henry. Two feet across, four inches thick. Pumpkin. Don't I wish Dorry was here!

Other Betsey (*gives him the pie*). I guess you'll have to take your plate in your hand, for there won't be room.

William Henry. Excuse my eating so fast; but I told Dorry I'd meet him at the station, and its 'most time to be there. Why (*looking at clock*), I must start this minute! (*Jumps up, picks up satchel and hat, and returns for his pie.*) Good-by, good-by! I've had a tip-top time.

Other Betsey. Wait a minute, William Henery. (*Goes to cupboard.*) There, there's a few peppermints to eat on the way.

Lame Betsey. Now, be sure, William Henery, not to run your head out, and get it knocked off in the cars!

William Henry. No, ma'am.

Other Betsey. And don't get out till you stop going.

Lame Betsey. And beware of pickpockets, William Henery: I've heard that they were very thick in the cars. Do beware of pickpockets!

SCENE IV

UNCLE JACOB'S HOUSE.

GRANDMA *knitting;* AUNT PHEBE *sewing;* MATILDA *making tatting;* LUCY MARIA *drawing;* UNCLE JACOB *reading newspaper.*

Grandma. I do wonder why William Henry don't come! (*Walks to the window, looks out with a hand each side of her face, opens outside door, and listens.*) I must go and look at the kitchen clock again. (*Steps out of the room. Returns with* WILLIAM HENRY *following tiptoe with his finger to his lips, smiling.*) Well, I do hope there hasn't any thing happened to the cars!

William Henry. I hope so too! (*Jumps squarely in front of* GRANDMA, *who walks into his arms.*)

Grandma. Why, sakes alive! William Henry, is that you?

William Henry. It just is! I do hope nothing has happened to those cars. They were such good cars!

Grandma. You scamp, you! (*All flock around*

BILLY, *laughing and talking.* TOMMY *enters, dragging* WILLIAM HENRY'S *carpet-bag.*)

Tommy. How long going ter stay, Billy?

William Henry. 'Most a week, Tommy; and it don't take long to stay at home a week.

Uncle Jacob. That's so! Come, let's be doing something!

Aunt Phebe. That means, let's be eating something! Come, girls, let's be putting the things on the table. Billy, how tall and spruce you do look! Poor grandmother, she's losing her little Billy!

[*Exit* AUNT PHEBE *and* LUCY MARIA.

Uncle Jacob. But what's her loss is his gain! I speak to sit next the frosted cake. Where's Tommy?

William Henry (*brings a bandbox*). I've brought you something, grandma. (*He takes out his jack-knife, and cuts the string of the bandbox.*)

Grandma. For me, William Henry! Why, how came you to think of bringing something to me? (WILLIAM HENRY *takes out a very elaborate dress-cap, puts it on his fist, and turns it round and round.*)

William Henry. It's a new cap, like Dorry's grandma's. Now sit down, and we'll try it on.

Grandma. Lor'! How should I look in a fashionable cap like that?

William Henry. Well, you just sit down, grandma, and we'll see. (GRANDMA *sits down.*) Come

here, Matilda, and see which is the front side of this. (*Takes off old cap, puts other partly on, and tips it forward.*)

Uncle Jacob. You tip it down too much.

William Henry. We'll turn it round.

Matilda. 'Tis upside down. [*Exit.*

Uncle Jacob. Now 'tis one-sided, like the colt's blinders.

Grandma. 'Twas never meant for my head.

Uncle Jacob. Send for Phebe! Phebe! (*Enter* PHEBE *and the girls laughing, with dishes, &c.*)

Aunt Phebe. Why, what in the world are you doing to your grandmother? A regular milliner's cap, as I breathe! Well done, grandmother! Here, let me give it a twist. It's hind side before! What do boys know, or men either? What are all these kinds of strings for?

William Henry. The great ones to hang down, the little ones to tie up. (*The girls pick the bows apart, and touch up the ruffles.*)

Grandma. Now, Phebe! Now, girls! Now, Billy!

Aunt Phebe. And, "Now, grandma!" There, fold your hands together. Don't lean back hard: 'twill jam easy. Now see, girls! Isn't she a beauty?

William Henry. She's the prettiest grandmother there is going; her face is just as round and smiling!

Tommy. Ought ter have her pokerdaff taken.

Aunt Phebe. Now you sit still, grandmother.

Now, girls! (*They draw two tables together, spread on the cloth, set on the dishes; then bring in loaves of plum-cake, pies, doughnuts, &c.; then they set a row of lights down the middle.*)

Tommy (*drags* WILLIAM HENRY'S *carpet-bag up to him*). I say, Billy, didn't you bring me any thing?

William Henry. You! Why, what makes you suppose I should bring you home any thing? S'pose I could remember anybody as small as you are?

Tommy. Ain't small! Big, most as big as you are, anyhow, — so, now!

William Henry. So you will be, if you live long enough, and go to bed early, and don't tease.

Tommy. Will that make me grow?

William Henry. Certain, sure!

Tommy. Well, did you bring me any thing?

William Henry. There you are, teasing!

Tommy. Ain't: only asking. Can't you answer questions?

William Henry (*opens carpet-bag, and takes out a harmonicum:* TOMMY *takes it*). Now, don't you let it blow your brains out; be careful! (TOMMY *drops it, and retreats.*)

William Henry. What are you afraid of?

Tommy. Is it a truly pistol?

William Henry. Not exactly (*takes it out of its case*), nor a pair of bellows, though you have to blow it. It is a harmonicum.

Tommy. A hurricane? (*Takes it out, and blows it.*)

Lucy Maria (*darting in, and looking at* GRANDMA). You have no idea, grandmother, — you haven't the faintest idea, how well you look!

Grandma. 'Tis too dressy for me. It don't feel natural on my head.

Uncle Jacob. Now, I should think that a cap would feel more natural on anybody's head than anywhere else.

Lucy Maria. It looks natural, I'm sure it does. (WILLIAM HENRY *takes* TOMMY, *and pretends to whirl him between his two hands, as one does a top.*)

Tommy. I say, Billy, *don't!*

William Henry. There, Tommy, that's the way the Hottentots do to take the mischief out of boys.

Aunt Phebe. I think if the Hottentots know any way of taking mischief out of boys, and are out of work, they might find employment in this country.

Lucy Maria. Come, grandmother, supper is all ready. (GRANDMOTHER *is escorted to her seat at the head of the table.* TOMMY *in a high-chair.* LUCY MARIA *puts a bib around his neck. By-play goes on between them during supper.*)

Aunt Phebe. Now, Billy, tell us all about your visit to Dorry's.

Uncle Jacob. Why didn't you have some fried eggs, Phebe?

Aunt Phebe. Now, did anybody ever hear the like? Fried eggs! When they're shedding their feathers, and it takes seventy-six fowls to lay a dozen, and every egg is worth its weight in currency! Better ask why we don't have cranberry-sauce!

Uncle Jacob. There! I declare, if I didn't forget that errand, after all!

Aunt Phebe. When I told you to keep saying over "cranberries, cranberries," all the way going along!

Uncle Jacob. They would 'a' set my teeth on edge before I got to Ne'miah's Corner. The very thought of 'em is enough. Lucy Maria, *please* to pass that frosted cake. I declare! I'm sorry I forgot that errand!

Lucy Maria. Come, Billy, tell us about your visit to Dorry's.

William Henry. Well, we got out two miles before we got there, — I mean, to the right station, — for Dorry wanted to make his sister Maggie think he hadn't come. We took a short cut through the fields, not very short, and went through every thing; my best clothes too; but it most all rubbed off; there were some boggy places. When we got to the house, the cook said everybody'd gone out. Then Dorry took me into a jolly great room, and left me. Three kinds of curtains to every window! What's the use of that? A good many kinds of chairs; I was going to sit down, but they kept sinking in;

every thing sunk in there. I tried three; and then I thought I would make some bows before the looking-glass, as you said, grandma. While I was trying to, I heard a little noise, and looked around; and what do you think? A queen and a princess, all over bright colors, and feathers, and shiny silks! The queen, that's Dorry's mother, couldn't think who I was, because they had been to the station, and thought we hadn't come. So she looked at me hard, — and I suppose I was very muddy, — and she said, "Were you sent of an errand here?" Before I could answer, Dorry came in. I tried to pull my feet behind me, and wished I was sitting down, for she kept looking toward them; and I wanted to sit down on the lounge, but was afraid it wouldn't bear. She was quite glad to see Dorry, but didn't hug him very hard. I know why: because she had those good things on. I like his father, because he talked to me some. But he's always tired: his office tires him. He isn't a very big man. He doesn't laugh any.

Grandma. Is Dorry's mother like Aunt Phebe?

William Henry. Like Aunt Phebe? Not one bit! Why, I don't believe she could lift a — a tea-kettle; not a real one. When she catches hold of her fork, she sticks her little finger right up in the air. She makes very pretty bows to the company, — sinks way down, almost out of sight. She gave us a dollar to spend. Wasn't she clever? Dorry says she likes him tip-top — if he'll only keep out of the way.

Lucy Maria. So you would like to live at Dorry's house, William Henry?

William Henry. I guess I'd rather live at our house. About every thing in that house is too good for a boy. But I tell you, they do have tip-top things, — great pictures, and silver dishes! Now, I'll tell you what I mean to do when I'm a man. I shall have a great, nice house, and nice things in it; but the folks shall be like our folks. I shall have horses, and a good many silver dishes, and great pictures; and grandma shall have a blue easy-chair, and sit down to rest.

Grandma. But, Billy, where are you going to get all these fine things?

William Henry. Why, don't you remember, grandmother, what you wrote down? "What a man wants, he can get, if he tries hard enough; or a boy either," you said.

Uncle Jacob. That's so! Stick to that!

(TOMMY *gets up in his high-chair, reaches far forward, tips over several things, among others, a cup, which breaks on the floor; and makes a great clatter in his attempt to reach the cake-dish.*)

Lucy Maria. Why, what under the sun are you doing, Tommy?

Tommy. I want that cake — and I've got it! I knew I tould, if I tried hard enough. Grandma said so!

SCENE V.

AN INTERVAL OF THREE YEARS IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE LAST SCENE.

(MATILDA *stoning raisins.* LUCY MARIA *chopping meat for mince-pies.* GRANDMA *knitting.* AUNT PHEBE *paring apples.* UNCLE JACOB. *Table, books, and writing-materials.*

Grandma. It's so hard to have that fire come, just when Billy wants a few hundred dollars to start him in the world!

Lucy Maria. Fires generally happen at the wrong time.

Uncle Jacob. I did hate to see all that corded wood go; but I don't regret it very much on Billy's account. Old Squire Brown used to say, that five hundred dollars was better to give a young fellow than five thousand; and five dollars, than five hundred; and five cents, than five dollars. (LUCY MARIA *shows her chopped meat to* AUNT PHEBE. AUNT PHEBE *shakes her head.*)

Aunt Phebe. Well, it's a great question to know

what to do with William Henry, or, rather, to know what William Henry shall do with himself.

Uncle Jacob. On the whole, I think it's best to let a boy follow his own inclinations.

Grandma. After being sure, in his own mind, what those inclinations are. (*Enter* WILLIAM HENRY.)

Uncle Jacob. I want the boy to learn to judge for himself, to decide for himself, and, above all, to respect himself.

Aunt Phebe. Yes, not to be afraid of what the world will think of him, but of what he will think of himself; else, what's the use of a conscience?

Lucy Maria. Mother used to say to me, when I was a little girl, sometimes, at night, "There's a little girl in this house named Lucy Maria. You know more about her than anybody else. Now think back, and see how you like Lucy Maria."

William Henry. Talking about what I'm to do? There are lots of nice things to do. (*Walks around, and helps himself to the raisins, apple, &c.*)

Uncle Jacob. Before making up your mind, it is well to look first at the dark side, to think over all the disadvantages, all the unpleasant things about the business in view. For instance, if you incline to be a doctor, don't let your mind *dwell* on driving up to the door in a nice little gig, stepping in with your little trunk, to stay fifteen minutes, and getting

two dollars for it. Think of the being called out stormy nights, think of never getting a vacation, and the dangerous cases, the worry, anxiety, and responsibility!

Aunt Phebe. It's easy enough to look on other folks' bright side.

Matilda. Billy couldn't be a doctor if he wanted to.

William Henry. That's so, without I find a money-bush growing up in the pastures.

Uncie Jacob. As to that. a person, as a general rule (there may be exceptions), can be any thing he wants to, if he wants to hard enough, and is willing to work hard enough. But let's stick to the main point, which is, that every employment has its unfavorable sides. A lawyer, for instance, — just think of a lawyer, who has, perhaps, a man's whole fortune, perhaps a man's life, depending upon his exertions, his skill, his brain-power! What anxious days and nights he must have!

Matilda. Ministers have the easiest time. They only work one day in the week.

Lucy Maria. When do you think they write their sermons?

Matilda. Oh! that doesn't take but a little while.

Lucy Maria. But they have to get all their ideas from somewhere.

Matilda. They have all those in their head, don't they?

Aunt Phebe. I've heard it was pretty hard work to think out a new sermon every Sunday.

Lucy Maria. And there's a whole meeting-house full of folks to preach to,—learned folks, stupid folks, bright folks, foolish folks, fault-finding folks; and one sermon has to suit all of them.

Grandma. And then there's the grief of pouring out heart and soul to folks who will, half of them, go off and forget every word, and be just as bad and mean and selfish as ever.

Uncle Jacob. Then there's teaching. That seems an easy life to people who sit at the windows, and see the schoolmaster go back and forth with his good clothes on. Only five or six hours a day, and all that pay, they say; not thinking of the time and money it took to fit the man to be a teacher.

Aunt Phebe. Or the worriments he has. From what I've had to manage of my own, I know what it must be to manage forty or fifty, no two alike. (Lucy Maria *shows the tray of meat to* Aunt Phebe. Aunt Phebe *turns a little of it over, and shakes her head.* Lucy Maria *sighs, and goes to chopping again.*)

Uncle Jacob. Take the trades. Remember, we are looking now at the dark side. I don't talk in this way to discourage our young man. I wouldn't run away from difficulties: I would fight them. I want

Billy to think of the bad things before making up his mind, but never afterward.

Lucy Maria. And, whatever he decides upon, *stick to it.* Now let's see what Billy wants to be. Do you want to be a poet?

William Henry. Well, no. I don't know as I should care to be a poet.

Lucy Maria. Do you want to be a learned man, — one of the kind that when they are on the track of an idea, or of some unknown creature, will give up dinner or supper for the sake of it?

William Henry. Not by a long chalk (*stealing another raisin*).

Matilda. I know. He wants to be rich, and live in that grand house he told about once, with gilt books, and blue easy-chairs, and silver dishes, and lots of money to give away.

William Henry. So I do. I want a good, large house, and full of every thing nice, so Lucy Maria can sit down, and draw pictures all the time, and Matilda can learn to play on the piano; and money in the bank, just when I'm a mind to send for it.

Uncle Jacob. Sure of this, are you? Sure?

William Henry. Yes, sure!

Uncle Jacob. Have you looked on the dark side?

William Henry. Isn't any dark side to being rich.

Uncle Jacob. A rich man told me once that he used to lie awake night after night fretting about his

losses, worrying for fear banks would fail, or stocks would fall. Besides, he said he was found fault with everlastingly. Everybody expected him to give. His poor relations thought he ought to support them; and, the more favors he did, the more curses he got. At last he gave away the biggest part of his money to be rid of the care of it, bought a little place, and settled down with a snug library about him, and a fiddle, to take comfort.

Lucy Maria. Then there's that lady Cousin Myra told about, who inherited a large quantity of silverware, — solid silver. The house was twice broken into; and, after a good many nights of lying awake, she hired a watchman. Then she lay awake to watch the watchman; and at last packed up the silver, and sent it to the bank, and there it staid the rest of her life.

Uncle Jacob. Well, Billy, are you willing to run the risk of having to take care of a hundred thousand dollars?

William Henry. That's just about what I'm willing to do, and more too.

Uncle Jacob. Then, one thing is settled. You know what you want. Next question is, "How will you get it? in what business?" That question is settled too, I suppose.

William Henry. Well, Dorry and I have talked it all over. I'm going to be a clerk in some great wholesale firm; begin low, and keep going up.

Grandma. Well, it's one thing to begin at the bottom to go up, and another to keep going up.

Uncle Jacob. That's so.

Aunt Phebe. Now, when the unpleasant things come up, it won't do, Billy, to think that some other business might be easier, or might bring in money sooner.

Matilda. How in the world is Billy going to pay his way in the city?

Aunt Phebe. Yes. How much money will it take? Let's make some kind of a reckoning.

Lucy Maria. Father and I have been counting up; and beside what Billy earns, which is one hundred the first year, and a hundred added every year, it will cost six hundred dollars.

Aunt Phebe (*all express surprise without speaking*). So you have been talking of this before!

Uncle Jacob. Well, it's no harm to calculate expenses, even if you don't go. I'll agree to find two hundred of the money, and, when the Corry-pond Lot sells, two hundred more; but we don't know when that will happen. And that isn't *all*, either. Now, how will you manage it, Billy?

Lucy Maria. I wouldn't wait. I'd begin to pile up the money to-morrow.

William Henry. How? I'm bound to earn my own way. I don't want anybody to help me.

Lucy Maria. Oh! go to work and earn. Work

between schools. Work vacations. Work evenings. Pick huckleberries, pitch hay, shovel gravel, peddle essences, go round getting subscribers to something, or grinding something. I wouldn't rest till I got where I wanted to be! Don't you know about Cæsar, — that great Cæsar you read about in history?

William Henry. Well, what about Cæsar?

Lucy Maria. When he was bound off to conquer a city, and came to a river, he swam it; never waited for a bridge to be built, but swam it! (LUCY MARIA *puts away the tray of meat; takes pencil and paper, and begins drawing.*)

Uncle Jacob. When I was a young man, and went a-courtin'— Now, what are you all laughing at? Don't you s'pose I went a-courtin' once?

Matilda. See mother blushing!

Uncle Jacob. What do you want to blush for, mother?

Aunt Phebe. Don't know, I'm sure. I have never had any reason to blush for that young man!

William Henry. Good for you!

Uncle Jacob. Pay attention. Now I've got to begin again. One time, when I went a-courtin' — she lived in a kind of a lonesome valley, you know, three or four miles from everywhere —

Lucy Maria. Yes, I know. Where Aunt Myra lives now.

Matilda. But 'tisn't very lonesome there now.

William Henry. Come, who's telling this story?

Uncle Jacob (*taking his hat*). Oh, well! If you don't want to hear —

Lucy Maria and Matilda. Oh, we do! we do! Sit down! Go on! Dear Father Jacob, you lovely Daddy Carver! We'll be like the dead hours o' night!

Uncle Jacob (*sitting down*). Now, how far had I got?

Lucy Maria. To three or four miles from everywhere.

Uncle Jacob. Why, no. I hadn't got there: I'd only started.

Matilda. You hadn't quite started, but we'll play you had.

Uncle Jacob. There wasn't much play about it. I started one afternoon, one cold afternoon in the winter-time, up to Warren's Valley. Went that day, because there'd been a heavy fall of snow, and we couldn't work. The men who had been trying to dig told me the roads were drifted up way over the fences, and that in the valley 'twould be over my head. I've thought of that day many and many a time since. Had my doubts about getting there, but told the men I'd go as far as I could, any way. "Time enough to turn back," says I, "when you *can't* get any farther!"

Lucy Maria. That's what I say when they tell me the walking isn't fit for a woman. I start; and, when I come to a bad place, I kite right across on the tip ends of my toes before the walking knows I'm there! 'Most always get there when they say I can't. (Lucy Maria *takes another sheet of paper, and draws.*)

Grandma. 'Tis wonderful how ways are provided sometimes, when you'd think 'twould be a thing impossible.

Matilda. It is to be hoped your girl was glad to see you.

Uncle Jacob. She knows best.

Aunt Phebe. You don't expect me to remember so long ago. Besides, 'twas a busy time of day with us, — supper getting, fritters frying, milkpails coming in.

Matilda. Caught, caught! If you don't remember, how do you know what was going on? Did you see him?

Uncle Jacob. Oh, yes! She stood in the doorway, watching out.

Aunt Phebe. Oh, I only went there to —

Lucy Maria. To let the cat in!

Matilda. When you saw her standing there, wasn't you glad?

William Henry. What a silly question! Course he was.

Matilda. How do you know? Are you glad when you go to see Maggie?

William Henry. Course I am. But I don't ever go.

Matilda. Mebby you'd like to!

William Henry. Course I would. You won't ever have to stand in a doorway after a snowstorm to watch for Sto. Thompson! His boots are too thin. His hands would be cold.

Lucy Maria. Now stop quarrelling, you two! (*Puts a few more touches to her drawing.*) There! I wonder if that is a good likeness of father. (*Shows a sketch of a traveller, head only visible above the snow. All crowd around it.*)

William Henry. How his hair stands up!

Lucy Maria. That's the wind tossing it, and saying to him "things unutterable."

Uncle Jacob. Not a bit unutterable. It was telling me to go ahead. And you may make just as much fun as you're a mind to, but that day's work was a lesson to me ever after. Don't know how many times, when taking hold of a desperate job, I've said to myself, "Begin! start! Time enough to turn back when you can't get any farther."

Lucy Maria. Here, Billy, I'll make you a present of these pictures. Put them under your looking-glass, where you can see them every time you brush your hair. Here's the one about Cæsar; a furious

stream, in the middle of which is a warrior, swimming across with might and main; in the distance, the towers of the city he is bound to conquer.

Aunt Phebe. What's that on his head?

Lucy Maria. That's his crown. Don't you see the peaks?

William Henry. What's he going to do with a fishing-pole?

Lucy Maria. That isn't a fishing-pole: that's his spear.

Uncle Jacob. And what's that on his face? Something to protect it?

Lucy Maria. Dear me! Can't you tell a Roman nose?

Matilda. What is that coming out of his mouth?

Lucy Maria. Follow it up, and see.

Matilda. "Never wait for a bridge!"

Lucy Maria. Now, William Henry, do you go this minute, and hang them under your looking-glass.

William Henry. All right! [*Exit.*

Lucy Maria. Billy is looking low-spirited, and what's to be done? Shall he go back to school?

Grandma. I do feel concerned about Billy. This noon he never touched the pie, and 'twas cut. I never knew Billy to let a cut pie go by, before.

Matilda. Incapacity was the true reason, I guess, grandma.

Aunt Phebe. No: I do think the boy is worried

and plagued in mind. He is anxious to go right into some active business. His mind is full of it, and he can't think of any thing else. Whatever he goes into, he goes in all over.

Grandma. 'Twas always so with Billy. If it was turtles, the back-yard was full of turtles, and I had to keep a broom in the entry to keep them back. If 'twas picking up old iron, he'd tip over all the ash-barrels to look for old nails; and in kite-time there'd be paste on every door-latch all over the house. I do hope, that, if Billy gets interested in money-making, it will not draw him into narrow, mean ways.

Aunt Phebe. No: I feel sure. I've watched him with a motive; and I've trembled for fear of seeing him take advantage, for fear of not being able to respect him, for fear of something in him, — something that went *bias*.

Grandma. But can you tell by these little matters what he'll do by and by?

Aunt Phebe. Yes, you can. Five cents can show a thousand dollars' worth of meanness.

Uncle Jacob. That's true.

Aunt Phebe. The greatest hinderance in his way, is his being so quick to flare up. He can't bear much, and he'll have to.

Lucy Maria. Well, I think it is best for William Henry to leave school, and go to earning.

Aunt Phebe. I don't know but it is. You see,

because he leaves school is no reason why he should stop getting an education.

Grandma. He will have a great many advantages in the city, if he is inclined to take them; and I think he will be.

Lucy Maria. Shall we say, then, that Billy shall wait until he has earned enough to pay at least two years' expenses?

Aunt Phebe. I'm afraid Billy will get discouraged, or unsettled in his mind, before that. For my part, I'm willing Jacob should sell that piece of land, and give Billy what it brings, right out and out.

Uncle Jacob. If a boy's purpose could be so easily shaken, or, I might almost say, could be shaken at all, that boy will never succeed as a business man. What I want is, that Billy should get used to clearing away difficulties. Six months' practice of this kind is a good apprenticeship to any sort of business. As for outside names, and rich men's names, and great men's patronage, I don't believe in any thing of the sort.

Lucy Maria (*taking out her millinery*). In fact, you don't want Billy boosted up, or hoisted up, or sent up on a kite.

Uncle Jacob. Just so.

Aunt Phebe. Well, then, try Billy a year, and let him work it; and at the end of that time, if he has done well, let him go to the city himself, and try for a place; and, if he succeeds, I've no doubt we can

make up what's necessary. I'll save all my butter money, and I sha'n't get a black silk dress next year, as I meant to, nor put *quite* so many plums in the pudding. (*Looks at* UNCLE JACOB, *who draws a long face.*)

Lucy Maria (*holding up a bonnet she is trimming.*) I believe I'm a born milliner: I'm going to have the finest bonnet in town. Took it down to the milliner yesterday to fix over, and she looked at it in that sort of contemptuous way, as only a milliner can. "Want that done over? that can't be done over," said she. "Of course it can," said I: "it always has been." And I brought it home, and we'll see. I shall save something out of that milliner's clutches for Billy, any way!

SCENE VI.

A YEAR AND A HALF HAS ELAPSED SINCE THE LAST SCENE.

Evening at UNCLE JACOB'S *house.* LUCY MARIA *bending over an open trunk, putting in garments, and wiping her eyes. Occasionally takes a cooky from a plateful, and puts it into the toe of a blue yarn sock, and tucks it into the trunk.*

Poor Billy! He's worked hard enough this last year! Now he's fairly off for that place in the city. I'm glad he had the spunk to hunt it up, and make the terms for himself. Didn't have much trouble, either. (*Stands up, and shakes out a pair of pants, and puts some ginger-snaps in the pocket. Folds a piece of paper with a sketch on it, and puts it in his coat-pocket.*) Billy always did like *surprises.* How we shall miss him! (*Takes out her handkerchief, and wipes her eyes and nose vehemently. Enter* GRANDMA *sad and tearful, with a box of salve, and some rolls of linen.*)

Grandma. Here's some carrot-salve, Lucy Maria,

and some old linen. Billy might cut his fingers, and have nobody — (*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*)

Lucy Maria. Just the thing, grandma, only I'm afraid it is putting temptation in his way; you make cutting fingers too pleasant a business. [*Exit* GRANDMA. *Enter* MATILDA, *sad, with red nose.*]

Lucy Maria. Why, Matilda! Your face looks as if it had been caught in a shower!

Matilda. So it has; for I've just been up in Billy's room, and every thing there does have such a good-by look! Oh, how we shall miss him! This place won't seem like the same place when — he — don't belong — to it! (*Weeps.* LUCY MARIA *and* MATILDA *weep and sob on each other's shoulder.*)

Lucy Maria (*solemnly*). You know, we agreed to be cheerful this evening.

Matilda. I know it, but then —

(*Enter Aunt* PHEBE, *radiant and smiling, with a pair of blue woollen stockings*).

Aunt Phebe. Here's one more pair of woollen stockings. I kept them to run the heels. Is there room enough for them? Boys away from home can't have too many stockings, or too stout, especially when they're hard on them. Here's Hannah Jane's letter. Something new for Hannah Jane to think of doing. But she said she had a few words to say to Billy, and wanted it put in the bottom of the trunk. And now, girls, don't you be foolish, you two. Consider, 'twould be

worse if he couldn't find a place, or if he wasn't fit for any. It has a good many bright sides to it. Come, don't be foolish!

Matilda. Some other folks have been foolish, I guess, by the looks of their face! I guess somebody's got a red nose.

(*Enter* GRANDMA *quietly.* *Aunt* PHEBE *wipes her eyes hastily.*)

Aunt Phebe. Pshaw! What do you want to talk nonsense for? Don't you know we've all got to be lively to-night, to keep grandmother up? Come, Lucy Maria, don't you give out! What's the use of having a nonsensical one in the family if she gives out when it comes to the pinch? There! Your father's coming. He don't feel so altogether calm as he makes for. I know him of old.

(*Enter* UNCLE JACOB, *mournfully, with a kettle of molasses.*)

Uncle Jacob. Come, it's best to have something going on, if it's only a kettle of molasses. You just step into the little kitchen, Matilda, and put it on the stove.

Matilda. To be sure! We'll put up some molasses-candy for Billy.

Lucy Maria. Better pour it warm into an old tin mustard-box, and then getting it out will take up his mind. [*Exit* MATILDA.

Uncle Jacob. Now, what are you all worrying about

Billy for? I never saw any thing like you women-folks for worrying! Nothing to worry about! 'Tain't as if we never expected William Henry home on a visit. And the city isn't such an *altogether* awful place, either! A person coming to the country can walk over the hills, in the woods and fields, and other pleasant places, or he can walk in the quagmires. And just so in the city: there are all kinds of places, and all kinds of people. A young man isn't obliged to go in the mud. (*Enter* MATILDA.)

Lucy Maria. True enough! From all I hear, I should think the city is something like our buttery, all in shelves, and a fellow may stay upon just whichever shelf he chooses. If he wants to use up his leisure in amusements, he can. That's one shelf. If he wants to spend it in low company, he can. That's another shelf. If he wants to become interested in ideas, he can. That's another shelf. There's the scientific shelf, and the musical shelf, and the artist's shelf, and the religious shelf, and so on. Mr. Calloon says there's no end to the privileges of the city. A young fellow can make of himself whatever he chooses. Some don't choose to make any thing of themselves, but that is their own fault. Free reading-rooms, free libraries, free lectures, free drawing-schools (don't I wish I could go to some of them!), free evening-classes, free

rooms for social meetings, — why, the city is no more a bad place than it is a good place! A young man can find and keep as good company as he chooses.

Matilda. No need of Billy feeling lonely very long.

Aunt Phebe. No: he'll soon find friends. Everybody will like Billy.

Matilda. And they'll invite him to their houses, likely as not; and I don't doubt he'll soon begin to feel quite acquainted.

Grandma. But that won't seem like home! There's no place like home. And the folks won't seem like our folks.

Lucy Maria. I don't want they should. I want we should seem better to him than anybody else.

Uncle Jacob. That's just what we all wish; wish him to feel truly that there's no place like home, — to look forward to coming home. All these young men who seem so adrift, in cities, are not really adrift. There are anchors out which strike home; only you can't see the cables.

Aunt Phebe. Now, Billy, and Dorry, and Bobby Short will be here in a few minutes with the Two Betseys. They've been out to return Miss Slade's call; and we mustn't look so sober.

Lucy Maria. It was so good of Dorry, and Bobby Short, to come up and spend this last day or two with

Billy! And I think the Two Betseys have had a real good time during their visit here, — don't you, mother? — for all it was so unexpected. Just like Billy to bring 'em without a minute's warning!

Aunt Phebe. Just like you, you mean, Lucy Maria, to get up such a surprise for us; and I must say you did it well.

Grandma. Well, *I* must say I've enjoyed seeing these two good women. I've enjoyed every moment they have been here. I'm always glad to see anybody that's been good to our Billy; and, if ever he had two good friends, they're the two.

Aunt Phebe. Hush! I hear the gate click: they're coming. Now, all look natural! Don't look so sober! Knit away, grandmother! Laugh, some of you! Billy's been mopy all day.

(*Enter* BILLY *and the* TWO BETSEYS, BOBBY SHORT, *and* DORRY.)

Lucy Maria. Good evening, again! Do let me take your things right here! Don't go up stairs to take them off! (*They take off their bonnets and shawls, and fold them precisely.*)

Aunt Phebe. Did you have a good call? (BILLY *sets chairs for them.*)

Other Betsey. Oh, yes! A proper good call. It does seem quite like our young days to go round seeing folks; don't it, you? (*to* LAME BETSEY.)

Lame Betsey. Sakes alive! It don't seem a week

since we went down, that evening, to see Jemima Green—

Other Betsey. Just as she was starting to go 'way out West into York State! Well, I never! How the time does fly!

Lame Betsey. But this does set me back, sure enough!

(LUCY MARIA *goes out with the* TWO BETSEYS' *wraps. They sit down.*)

Uncle Jacob. How's that molasses, Matilda?

Matilda. Oh! (*Runs out of the room.*)

William Henry. Come, fellows, and see my pigeons. They've gone to roost now, and you can see them all together. [*Exit* WILLIAM HENRY, DORRY, *and* BOBBY SHORT.]

Lame Betsey. How kind and thoughtful Lucy Maria is!

Grandma. Yes. But you never read me that letter she wrote you, inviting you to come here.

Other Betsey. No, Betsey, you never did! Now, you just read it to her, and let her see what a "beater" for persuadin' Lucy Maria is!

Lame Betsey (*reads from a letter she takes from her pocket*).

MY DEAR TWO BETSEYS.

We never saw you, but we believe in you with all our hearts: that means something more than just

believing, doesn't it? — means something warmer; means something more kindly. But we want to see, as well as to believe. Seeing is believing, but believing isn't seeing. Now, we want both of you to come and make us a visit. Do, won't you, if you can't stay more than two days? But I think it will take all of a week to get thoroughly acquainted. We should all be so glad! You have no idea how it would please grandmother. Grandmother! why, she would cover her entry with cloth of gold, if she had any, for the feet of those who had been so kind to her Billy! Any way, she'd lay down her new braided rug. I've heard her wish a great many times that she could be acquainted with you; and mother was saying, only the other day, that she did wish she could see Billy's Two Betseys. Now, I know just what your excuses will be: so I'll set them up for you, and knock 'em all over. We'll call 'em *four pins.*

1. Can't leave the shop.
2. Too old.
3. Can't afford it.
4. Shall make too much trouble.

Now see them fall down! You can get Gapper Sky Blue, and Rosy, to stay in the shop while you're gone. (One down.) As for being old, that's no excuse, so long as you're both in tolerable health. On the contrary, it's a strong reason for coming;

for, the older you are, the less time you will have to enjoy this pleasant world, and especially us pleasant people (!), and smaller chance we have of knowing you. Now, it stands to reason, that, if there's but little time left, you ought to make the most of it. (Two down.) Thirdly, please find enclosed two package-tickets; and be sure and fetch with you a large trunk, and we'll cover the remaining expenses with butter, beans, or other farm-things of the eatable sort that we can give, and not feel it a bit, and be glad to. I know just what father's and mother's ideas are about such matters. They believe that things grow to be eaten, and given away; and, if they take comfort giving away, why can't you let 'em take it? Pray don't grudge them that little bit of comfort. Now, if you have got a great box of money hid under your floor, even if you have, I know you won't take offence at my offer, but will only look at my motives. Any way, there are three down. As for trouble, you wouldn't make much, three of us healthy females at home most of the time, all able to work; and I do like to stir up the good things. I'm so glad one of you is lame! On our own account, I mean. Mother says 'tis very good to have an invalid in the family, makes the rest more kind, more unselfish, and better every way, than they would be otherwise; but, you see, there isn't one of us willing to make herself an

invalid for the sake of the rest being better. (Four down.) Now all of your four pins are knocked over; and you've nothing to do but put on your things, and come. No matter what sort of things they are: we don't dress up ourselves; couldn't, if we wanted to. So there's nobody here to be afraid of.

There are not many people, especially many strangers, whom I would urge so to come. But I know you are exactly the ones we should enjoy a visit from. We have no great attractions to hold out. A hearty welcome you will be sure of; and, as for Billy, I don't know but he would do what he sometimes threatens, viz., jump over his own head, which feat is becoming more difficult every day that he lives. And, as for being strangers, you're not: we've known you ever so long. And, by the way, my calling you the Two Betseys, you won't mind, will you? for Billy never told us any other name.

Trusting to see you soon, I remain, very affectionately your friend,

LUCY MARIA CARVER,
(*Billy's Cousin.*)

Now, don't you see how we couldn't help a-comin'?

(TOMMY *comes in playing on a harmonicum,* (*march time*). *Enter* BILLY, DORRY, *and* BOBBY SHORT, *and begin a polka, seizing one and another for a partner.* MATILDA *returns.* LUCY MARIA *enters.*)

Lucy Maria. Why not have a cotillion?

William Henry. That's the talk! One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. Aunt Phebe, come, you'll dance, won't you now? Course you will.

Matilda. Yes. You and father. Do, now! Come, you can all hop round. Anybody can just hop around.

Uncle Jacob. Hop round! *I dance:* I don't hop round! Don't you think I can dance? I'll leave it to mother. (*Walks up to* OTHER BETSEY, *bows, and offers his arm.*)

Aunt Phebe. Well, I believe you can do something of the stirring kind, but I didn't know there was any special name to it.

Lucy Maria. I've made up my mind to have every one of you upon the floor, and start a contra-dance. Come, mother. Come, everybody. Come, Miss Betsey, you're as young as any of us. (*All are busy securing partners.*)

Other Betsey. Well, I do feel as young as ever I did. When I was a gal, folks thought, being

weakly, I should never live to grow old; and *I never have.*

William Henry. Hurrah for you! Shall I have the pleasure? (*Makes a bow, and offers his arm.*)

Other Betsey. But I guess my dancing days are over. (*Bashfully.*)

Uncle Jacob. No, young man, not quite so fast. I spoke first.

(LUCY MARIA *mounts a chair at the side of the stage, with comb and paper.*)

Lucy Maria. Now, I'm committee of arrangements, floor-manager, and band of music, and dancing-master. Attend to me.

(LAME BETSEY *sits in her chair* R. F.)

They take their places thus: —

UNCLE JACOB,	OTHER BETSEY,
DORRY,	MATILDA,
BOBBY SHORT,	AUNT PHEBE,
WILLIAM HENRY,	GRANDMA.

LUCY MARIA *begins "Fisher's Hornpipe" on the comb and paper, calls out the figures, jumps down from her chair, now and then, to set things right, or to twitch* TOMMY *out of the way, who is always under foot.* WILLIAM HENRY *shows off his dancing-school airs, with extraordinary bows.* GRAND-

MA *dances with little, fine steps.* OTHER BETSEY *dances in very stiff, angular fashion, going up and down like a churn-handle, and branching out in her extensive balances to the right or left.* UNCLE JACOB *dances in a dignified manner, taking the steps very carefully, and putting in double-shuffles. After a while it comes to a general confusion; down the middle, up outside, turning and balancing, all going on at the same time.*

CURTAIN FALLS.

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